

Impossible Words

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/30905573) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/30905573>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Minecraft (Video Game) , Video Blogging RPF
Relationship:	Clay Dream/GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)
Character:	Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Soulmates , Soulmate-Identifying Marks , Soulmate - Tattoos , Soulmate - First Words , Alternate Universe - Soulmates , Soulmate AU , Tattoos , Alternate Universe - Tattoos , Romantic Soulmates , Light Angst , Pining , Mutual Pining , Love Confessions , Idiots in Love , First Meetings , First Kiss , Touch-Starved GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , Touch-Starved Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , Pining GeorgeNotFound (Video Blogging RPF) , Pining Clay Dream (Video Blogging RPF) , For some reason soulmate aus are really hard for me :/
Language:	English
Series:	Part 20 of DreamNotFound COMFORT Fics
Collections:	MCYT , call 911 for I have died at the sheer perfection that are these fics
Stats:	Published: 2021-04-25 Words: 2670

Impossible Words

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Summary

It read, “I love you too.” George’s face twisted up with confusion. How could those be his soulmate’s first words to him?

(AKA Everyone gets a permanent tattoo that shares their soulmate’s first words to them, but George doesn’t think he’ll ever find someone.)

It happened the day George turned 18, like it did for everyone else. He had been sleeping when he felt it, a warmth crawling across his ribs, starting from just below his sternum and tracing under his pectoral muscle in a curved arc until it stopped just before his armpit.

His words had appeared.

He threw himself out of bed in a second, leaping toward the mirror with a desperation he couldn’t name. Even people who didn’t believe in soul mates got excited about their words. It was the thing that tied you to the love of your life (theoretically), and it could tell you volumes about how you

would meet them. George's mom had chosen her job because of her words.

He peeled his shirt off, revealing his lanky body to an uncaring mirror, and scanned up until he saw them. They were in a beautiful cursive script, with a million loops and curves to make it ridiculously fancy, almost ostentatious, and they read, "I love you too."

George's face twisted up with confusion. How could those be his soulmate's *first* words to him? It just seemed so bizarre that the first thing his soulmate said to him was a confession of requited love. Did that mean George would confess his love first? That didn't seem like him at all...

There was nothing he could do about it at 3:17 am, though. He shrugged, sleep already begging for him to return, and slid back into his bed. He could deal with it in the morning.

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There were no answers to be found. The whole point was that you didn't tell *anyone* your words, or they could be used against you to try and create some kind of false soulmate bond for the benefit of the people around you. He started to ask his mom about it the following morning, but she just cut him off and explained to him how it was supposed to be. "No matter how weird your words seem, they will make sense when they happen. I can't wait to hear them, but only *after* you find your person. Okay, sweetie?"

"Okay, Mum." George sighed into his cereal, somehow able to feel that warmth tracing his chest again. The strange words almost burned him.

They became a thorn in his side, a piece of popcorn in his gums that he worried at with his tongue. There was no research, no asking, no sharing he could do, so he just sat with them, alone in his room, trying to figure out what it could possibly mean. It was a small obsession that he sometimes allowed to consume him, but he couldn't actually get anywhere.

After a while, he realized it was a form of self-torture and decided to let it go. Whatever power gave him his words must have glitched or had an error or something. Maybe it was just a funny joke, or a sarcastic biting response. No matter what it was, there was no need to dwell on it any longer.

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He met Dream about two years later, randomly through friends. The moment they started talking, there was a jolt, a kind of firework in his heart that he couldn't name, but it couldn't possibly mean anything. Dream wouldn't have even gotten his words yet, and he had never said, "I love you *too*," since George couldn't say it first. Dream expressed his affection freely from nearly the beginning, but George was far more reserved about it.

The day Dream turned 18, George got a desperate, confused call from him. "George, fuck, is there a way for the words to be glitched?"

George had been sleeping, so he had to take a moment to rub his eyes and yawn before he could

answer. “Um, I dunno. Why?”

There was nothing for a moment, just heavy breathing and confusion. “I can’t tell you what the words are...”

George wanted to ask so badly. He wanted to know if they were the first thing George had said to him when they met, or since he turned 18, but he knew it was impossible. Besides, if the words had been George’s, Dream wouldn’t have hesitated to mention it. “No, you can’t...”

“Didn’t you say yours were weird too?” Dream prompted gently.

“Yeah, but Dream...” George sighed, letting his head fall into his hands. How could he already be so *deeply* in love. “We can’t...”

“I know...”

The conversation moved on from that point, and they didn’t discuss the words, their feelings, or the tension snapping between them.

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George tried not to think about the growing feelings he had for the strange, affectionate man that had dropped into his life. They weren’t meant to be together, clearly, or they would have felt the words burn again, so there was no point in letting himself love Dream. It couldn’t be him (no matter how much George wanted it to be).

That didn’t stop George from loving him though.

It was a constant ache. Dream’s voice, his laugh, his sprinkled compliments, his confessions of love. They all hurt, claws in George’s skin, because it couldn’t be real. The soulmates thing could be so incredibly frustrating. What if you wanted someone who wasn’t your soulmate? Was he expected to bury his feelings for Dream until some magical perfect person said, “I love you too?” It felt stupid and a bit cruel.

He was pretty sure that Dream loved him back too. Of course, Dream said “I love you” nearly every day, but at some point, the words became softer and more sincere. They started to touch George, laying kisses directly against his fast beating heart, and sometimes, it would be so much that he would start to tear up. He spent a lot of time wanting to ask Dream, but he didn’t have the courage.

Besides, they weren’t soulmates, so even if the love was mutual, it felt pointless.

So they didn’t talk about it. They hovered in a perpetual will they/won’t they, never communicating, never admitting, just waiting and wanting and staring after each other with puppy dog eyes. From an outside perspective, it might have seemed pathetic, but from the inside, it was protection. Why would they sign up for an eventual, guaranteed hurt, especially when one might their soulmate before the other?

It kept growing, of course, occasionally reaching out to bite them. George wasn’t sure how much it was affecting Dream, but sometimes, it would just crash over him, a tsunami of wanting that threatened to drown him and tear him apart at the same time. Months of George muting himself to

gasp in a shaky breath, fighting tears when his brain would lash out, reminding him the sweet things Dream did weren't *actually* for him, and one day, George would witness them being said to someone else.

It was unbearable at the worst of times, but George couldn't live without the best of times, so he learned to handle it. At some point, one of them would probably break, but he wasn't ready to commit to a doomed relationship.

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It was Dream who broke first. He held out for a long time, but he had always been the more open of the two, so, of course, it was always clearer when he was disintegrating.

One afternoon, Dream came to George absolutely shattered. They had spent some time apart (not on purpose, just because of normal life stuff), and Dream was gone from it, spiraling down an endless hole of anxiety and loneliness. He came into the call, practically shaking and definitely crying, and George wasn't sure what to do.

"*George !*" His voice cracked under the weight of his confession, sounding close to snapping. "I don't care. I don't *care* about soulmates! I *love* you, George, and I don't want to live without you anymore. I can't stand it. I want to be *yours* . I want you to be *mine* . I think you feel it too, right? I see it sometimes, and I can't understand why the hell we would distance ourselves over what might be when we already have something beautiful right now!"

George was stunned. It was exactly how he felt, but he had not expected to receive it, and it was slightly overwhelming, especially since it was everything he wanted. All he could do for a while was stare blankly at Dream's face, trapped behind a screen, his mouth falling open.

"George?" Dream asked, suddenly uncertain of himself.

"I love you too, Dream, and you're absolutely right. I don't want to live without you either." George couldn't help but feel giddy and wonderful, like he was doing the right thing. Who cared about some random soulmate when he had *Dream* ?

So they started dating, and immediately everything was perfect. They had been synchronized before, but they had each been holding back, for fear of revealing their feelings to the other. Now, they were two puzzle pieces, completely flush with each other. They still bickered and teased sometimes, but it felt right, *perfect* even, and they let themselves forget about soulmates.

One night, by the light of the same moon from more than four thousand miles away, they promised each other not to end things. If they ever did find their soulmate, it wouldn't matter to them. They would stick together, no matter what. That took the last thread of anxiety from them, and as they fell asleep on call together, it almost felt like they were cuddling.

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Setting up their first time to meet in person took more time than either of them would have liked.

The pandemic dragged on and flights from Orlando to England or vice versa remained just outside the realm of safety for too long.

They were forced to make due with near constant calls (which was how they had been before) and the occasional private call that ended in sweaty bodies and gasping breaths and games of pretend where they imagined they were together.

Not getting laid was honestly the least of their worries, though. George just so desperately wanted to *hug* his boyfriend, which he didn't think was too much to ask. They talked a big game about how they wouldn't leave their bed for the first day together, but George imagined most of that time would be spent just looking into each other's eyes and running fingers against skin that had been forbidden for so long, just to relish that it was allowed.

Finally, it was deemed legitimately safe, and George was on a plane literally the next day. They had YouTube money, and the neediness was so pressing that George would have done a lot to get to the United States. The entire flight had him nervous and shaky, though. What if they didn't get along as well in person? What if they saw each other naked, saw those hidden areas of skin with words that would never match, and it changed things? His fingers traced the swoop of writing subconsciously, cursing that it was there and permanent. How would he be able to stand to see Dream's either? To know that it wasn't meant for him?

He tried not to think about it.

Suddenly, everything was moving too fast. He was pushed roughly off the plane and jostled into Orlando International Airport, led by the horde of people to the baggage claim where he was meant to meet the man he loved more than anything. He scanned the area, fidgeting with the hem of his hoodie, trying to push down his nerves, and there Dream was.

They locked eyes from across the room and it was instant. There was a *spark* and it jolted George forward. Without even thinking, he was running, sprinting full speed with a desperation he had never known. Dream seemed to feel the same, and they crashed into each other, knocking the air out of one another with a grunt. There was no hesitation as Dream lifted him into the air, spinning him and squeezing him with so much *love* that George could almost drown in it. He was giggling, spinning with closed eyes in pure bliss, then Dream gently set him down on the carpet. George looked up, catching the sheepish expression as it formed on Dream's face.

The moment their eyes locked, George couldn't help it. It bubbled out of him like fresh spring water, slaking his thirst. "I love you so much." In that moment, he couldn't have cared less about soulmates or eternities. Standing there, lost in Dream's loving gaze, he knew that this was all he would ever need.

Dream smiled so wide that it almost broke his face, like he was sure everything would be alright. There was a secret in that grin, something George wasn't sure of. Then, Dream replied, almost too giddy, "I love you too!"

But those were George's words... George felt a warmth, a tingling across his ribs, like the soft brush of a thumb, right where his tattoo was. His eyes met with Dream's, and he smiled. "Oh?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Dream murmured, leaning forward until their noses brushed. "You said my words first, sweetheart."

"Your words were, 'I love you so much?'" George asked, incredulously.

"Yep! And I never thought I would meet someone who would say that to me at our first meeting!"

Dream laughed.

George couldn't help but join him. "You're telling me! I mean, you know me, Dream. When was I ever going to say I love you first, so that someone could reply with 'too?'"

"Apparently, with me."

George might have wanted to wait until they left the airport before doing anymore public displays of affection, but there was this *need*, like he had to seal their discovery with a kiss. Besides, they were already so close...

He tipped his face up, an invitation, and stood on his tiptoes. Dream got the picture immediately and gathered George in his arms, pressing their lips together, gently at first, but then with more force, so that George was practically falling backwards as Dream caught him. George couldn't help but love every second, feeling a kind of completeness that he had never known. It made him want to giggle and cry at the same time, but he settled on moving his mouth against Dream's and savoring their moment.

Suddenly, the magic was lost, and they remembered they were in an airport, so they pulled apart with red faces and mussed hair, clearing their throats and gathering George's bags. They tried to ignore the people staring, some sighing over young love, some offended by two men kissing in public, as they went to get the rest of George's things.

When they got to Dream's house, they quickly shed their shirts, staring in awe of each other's words, which had been an impossible secret for so long. Starting from just below Dream's sternum and tracing his pectoral muscle in a curved arc were the words, "I love you so much," written in a beautiful cursive script, with a million loops and curves to make it ridiculously fancy, almost ostentatious. George couldn't help but reach out and touch it, tracing his fingers along the letters like he was in a trance, and he felt Dream do the same.

"Woah..." George finally said.

Dream just nodded, a little stunned.

After slipping their shirts back on, they lounged about for a while, reveling in having actually found their soulmate and telling everyone they could think of, but it gnawed at the back of their minds. They suddenly realized that they had no idea what the actual lore was around soulmates. It had been told to them time and time again, but as something everyone just knew. They decided to Google it, just to settle their minds and try to understand.

*Soulmate Tattoo: A tattoo that magically forms at the age of 18 somewhere on the newly adult body. It has the first words their soulmate will say to them **in person**.*

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